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My experiences with modern natives of Easter Island make me doubt the truth of this system of retaliation. Certainly the offended person would try to avenge the theft by any method possible, but it seems hardly probable that the thief would accept his punishment if he were the stronger.

At the present time, a robbed person may try to identify the thief and recover the lost property. A thief caught in the act of stealing is punished. Many natives now go to the Chilean Subdelegado to complain, although they know he can do little. The captain of the training ship, *Baquedano*, is the supreme authority to which the islanders appeal. He stays on the island only a few days and metes justice according to his temper or fancy.

VENGEANCE

Persons who felt deeply injured or unjustly treated were sometimes overwhelmed by madness (*heva*) which led them to commit the most daring deeds. A man or woman who yielded to this state of fury ate soil (*kai te oone*), ran to-and-fro with a rat in his mouth, and tried to harm those who had offended him. "I am eating soil" is still a common expression to indicate anger or spite. These crises were considered temporary diseases. If a person in this state of anger recited an appropriate charm, he might succeed in killing the person who had aroused his wrath. (See the legend of Raraku, p. 370.)

Revenge was the most usual incentive for wars and feuds. Many tales and legends of Easter Island are concerned with details of revenge (*ati te kopeka*) taken by lineages or tribes for the murder of one of their members. According to information given me by the natives, the family of the murdered tried to kill the murderer, but if they did not succeed, any other person belonging to the culprit's family was killed. The victim's father or some other relative resorted to a special priest called *timo-ika* (chanter of the corpse) who performed certain rites to cause the murderer to die. Every lineage or subtribe had many such priests who carried out all rituals for revenge. This did not prevent the injured party from waging war or pursuing the culprit. The corpse of the dead man was put on the ahu and the *timo-ika* chanted spells, at the same time brandishing a pallet (*rapa-ika*). My informant gave rhythmic and gutteral sounds which he pretended were an imitation of the *timo-ika's* chant. The only words he remembered were: *Oeo e hiva e*. From time to time the priest turned the body of the dead, an act supposed to be very harmful to the family or the entire group of the murderer.

The pallets used in the above ceremony were of wood or bone, oval, and provided with a short handle. Two *rapa-ika*, one made of wood and the other of whalebone, were purchased by Thomson (215, pl. 53, figs. 3-4). The wooden specimen had cracked and the two pieces were sewn together through small holes perforated along the break. The whalebone pallet is 30 inches long and 14 inches wide. It is decorated with the incised figures of two birds traced according to the style of the tablets.

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628 754 The ceremony is still remembered by the natives and was well known to Salmon, who gave some information about it to Geiseler and Thomson. Geiseler (87, p. 28) says:

> Revenge was more frequent in days of old than it is now. The man claiming vengeance publicly challenged his enemy. For that he placed on his head a wig made of horsehair and made a loud noise by striking against each other a wooden and a bone pallet, and by singing continuously insulting and revengeful chants. The duels were [672] fought with spears and clubs of various descriptions. Sometimes they killed the children of the offender from revenge.

237 301 628 A wig of horsehair (*rehau*) was collected by Geiseler and is now in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (VI 4978). This specimen is undoubtedly a curio without much ethnological value. The poor technique and the use of foreign material suggest that it was made after European contact. This wig does not differ greatly from those used by lovers who did not want to be recognized (p. 114). At the time of Geiseler's visit (1884) feuds were no longer fought and duels, in the strict sense of the word, are not referred to in traditions or legends of the island.

754 628 Thomson (215, p. 536) says the pallets were used "in working a charm against an enemy. The injured individual performing a sort of convulsive dance, makes mystic movements with the paddle meanwhile muttering incantations in a monotonous tone. The result is believed to be the speedy death of the person against whom the fetish is invoked." Valuable information about this has been published by Routledge (194, p. 229):

> Most elaborate spells were performed in connection with a man who had been slain, known as "tangata ika", or fish-man; the corpse was kept from resting either day or night while his neighbours went in pursuit of vengeance. In front of one *ahu*, on the north coast, some pieces of the old statues have been formed into a rude chair. On this, it was said, had been seated the naked body of a man belonging to the district, Kotavari-vari by name, who had been killed at Akahanga on the south coast. One man kept the corpse from falling, while two others sat behind and chanted songs to aid the avengers. These watchers were covered with black ashes, wore only feather hats, and carried the small dancing-paddle known as "rapa"; the chief man in charge of the ceremony was known as the "timo". It must have been an eerie scene as dusk came on. The story is told of a murder near Tongariki. In this case the victim's corpse was placed on the *ahu* and turned over at intervals by the watchers. Hanga Maihiko, a converted image *ahu* on the south coast, is one of those which have a paved approach, and there are on the pavement two stones—pieces of a hat and a statue—especially used for exposing "fish-men". If these charms failed to act, there was a still more reliable way. The clothes of the victim were buried beneath the cooking-place of the foe, and when he had partaken of food prepared there he would certainly die the night following. Some of the carved tablets were connected with these rites; one was certainly known as that of the "Ika", while there is said to have been another called "Timo", which was the "list" kept by each *ahu* of its murdered men.

Routledge is wrong when she translates *iko* as fish; this word means "slain person" and is a homonym of the word *ika* signifying "fish."

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These spirits were sometimes amiable and well disposed toward certain men. Natives told both Routledge (194, p. 237) and me of a man whose spirit dug his potato field for him every night. Magicians, especially sorcerers, were served by spirits who were their familiars. The servant-spirits would enter a man whom their master wished to kill or would leave their victim if ordered to do so. They would unveil the future, and foretell the issue of wars or the results of the annual egg races at Orongo.

Probably most of the spirits were mischievous and fond of playing tricks on men. Routledge believes that they were kind or harmful depending upon whether or not they were well fed. However, offerings of food were probably made only to well-known gods or to spirits having distinct personalities. Probably the tempers of the minor demons were unaffected by the conduct of men toward them.

The name *akuaku*, now used indiscriminately for lesser gods and spirits, must have meant originally only ghosts or spirits of the dead, although it is not found elsewhere in Polynesia with this meaning. Desmedt (59, p. 135) considers the Easter Island term *akuaku* cognate with the Mangarevan *akuaku*, which means "thin, speaking only of men and women." This parallel is supported by the Easter Island idea in which ghosts resemble emaciated men.

Akuaku entered the *niuhi* which were ferocious, half-legendary sharks or other dangerous sea animals. In this form they killed people. My informant probably rationalized this old belief by telling me that only bad men were prey of shark spirits. The *akuaku* also caused diseases and were expelled by priests to save their patients.

Spirits of the dead had all the features of the living, but they were emaciated, had protruding bones, and their bowels could be seen in their sunken abdomens. In a word, they were prototypes of the famous wooden images of Easter Island. Such was the appearance of the two *akuaku* whose images and culture hero Tuu-ko-ihu fixed forever in wood (p. 260). Such is still the aspect of the dead when they manifest themselves in dreams. A girl whom we knew well told us that in a nightmare she had seen her grandfather nodding to her. When he turned his face toward her, she noticed that he was half-rotted and that his bowels, in an advanced state of putrefaction, were visible.

Ghosts were especially terrifying and Roussel (190, p. 495) writes: "They seemed to fear very much the haunting souls. Very often they came for me to drive away these malignant spirits of their fathers or mothers who frightened them and tore at their bowels." Even now the *akuaku* interfere in the daily life of Easter Islanders. A girl who was attending our camp and who had been to the well to draw water came back shivering and white, telling us that an *akuaku* had taken the pail she had left on the edge of the

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The term *ivi-atua* (lineage of the gods) is interpreted by the present population as magician or sorcerer, and they use the same word for a charm or a spell. The *koromaki* (the one who violently desires something) were also in the category of priests. Usually the word *koromaki* was followed by the mention of the thing wanted, as rain, fish, and so on. These *koromaki* were expert in casting spells and had the power to kill enemies or to benefit people who resorted to them. Apparently their function was similar to that of the *ivi-atua*. Here again is manifest the tendency to represent all the ancient priests as wizards.

In Mangareva the general term for priest is *taura*; Laval gives it as *tahura*. The name *tahura* on Easter Island is applied to the servants of the king, but as *tahura* may also mean "expert", the fact that the king's attendants were *tahura* does not imply that they were priests.

Divine Possession

It is evident from the allusions of the missionaries that in Easter Island, as in all of Polynesia, the gods were supposed to take possession of the priests and to use them as mediums between themselves and the people. The present natives remember that when a priest was possessed by a god, he spoke in a shrill, high-pitched voice. In the legend of the young men who pretended to be Makemake, it is said that " . . . they made their voice like that of a god (*hakaatua i te reo*)." The word used in Easter Island, as in most of Polynesia, to mean possession by a god was the verb *uru* (to penetrate, to enter). To express the action of the priest Uru-a-rei, who tried to exterminate the Miru by means of religious rites, my informant used the word *uru* and translated it "to make sorcery." The story tells that the priest was dizzy because he turned round and round (*mimiro*) in order to make his *uru*.

Sorcerers

Sorcery seems to have been practiced on Easter Island to much the same extent and in much the same manner as on other Polynesian islands. Inspirational priests (*ivi-atua*) or sorcerers (*tangata taku*) had at their service familiar spirits through whom they cured or killed people or accomplished difficult tasks (p. 319). There were numerous charms connected with every action. There was even a spell to make people hurry.

A person who wanted to get rid of an enemy called in a sorcerer, to whom he presented food cooked especially for the purpose. The magician dug a hole in the ground and in it he buried a white cock with head turned down. The place was trodden upon, and after a few days the cock's death was followed by that of the person against whom the magic rite was directed. Such procedure was known as *taku mo mate* (charm for death). This typical prac-

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754 tice of black magic has its counterpart in white magic in the *taku mo ora* (charm for life) which was performed by an old man to prolong some person's life. I was told that, according to the rules of sympathetic magic, the cock whose death provoked that of a man could be eaten by the sorcerer, but the desired effect would be postponed.

The usual way to exert a supernatural influence or to facilitate any activity was to pronounce a spell (*tarotaro*). A native, Charli Teao, gave a sentence which he claimed was a spell to make someone ill: "Ka oho, ka uru ki roto ki te kokoma manava—ka taviri, ka tavara" (May it go, enter the intestines, the bowels—he is staggering, he is falling). When asked what thing or person was to enter the victim, the informant said that the formula alluded to signs on the tablets. Every sign was supposedly endowed with magical power and a sort of independent existence which made possible the sending of one sign (*rona*) when need of it was felt. The animal or object represented by the sign acted according to the will of the enchanter. This statement must be accepted with great caution, as the man who made it is young and could not have known very much of the past. But it is not unlikely that the signs of the tablets were credited with supernatural virtue after the real significance of the tablets was forgotten. At any rate, the association of the symbols on the tablets with "devils" who have independent activities and personalities throws some light on the primitive conceptions regarding magic on Easter Island.

A curse pronounced by a priest was expected to have an immediate effect and consequently was greatly feared. Eyraud (81, vol. 38, p. 71) aroused violent feeling among the natives and was almost considered an evil sorcerer for having said to a chief, Torometi, "You shall die." As soon as these words were uttered, Torometi was struck as by lightning. He was seized with violent shaking and his features and gestures expressed anger and terror. The audience was greatly agitated and everyone shouted, "The Father said: E pohe oe!" The missionary had no intention of cursing him but only wanted to remind him that he was mortal and should fear another life in which he was [578] to pay for his sins. Natives resent as a deadly insult the expression *vai hakari* (body full of water) which they explained is the equivalent of a curse. It is applied only to people who have beautiful fields or are proficient in some activity. Such people are said to die young.

OMENS

787 Dreams occupy in the imagination of the present natives the same place as they had formerly. The islanders are convinced that most dreams are significant and that they foretell future events. When looking for antiquities, the natives attributed great importance to any hint that they obtained in their sleep. Most of their dreams at the end of the year are concerned with the

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translate the tablets. They tackled the problem with the preconceived idea that the signs formed a script, and they angrily dismissed informants who were unable to prove that they were actually reading.

Pinart (178, p. 239) says, probably falsely, that at his time the tablets were used to roll string for fishlines and nets. Geiseler (87, pp. 23-24) obtained only general information about the tablets and that probably from Salmon to whom he had entrusted the study. He says: " . . . wooden tablets with signs for genealogies" were still in the possession of a chief named Hangeto. "This writing was known only by the former kings and chiefs . . . The script was used for two purposes: to send short notices to chiefs of other villages about important events which they did not want to entrust to oral messages, and in the form of tablets, to record genealogies."

Four years later (1886), Thomson (215, pp. 513-526) made a serious attempt to obtain from the natives a clue to the mystery of the tablets. An old man named Ure-vaeiko, who professed to have been under instruction in the art of hieroglyphic reading at the time of the Peruvian raid, claimed to understand most of the characters. Unfortunately he was very pious and "declined to furnish any information, on the ground that it had been forbidden by the priests." Finally he was prevailed upon to read from photographs of the tablets owned by Jaussen. He recited legends fluently "though it became evident that he was not actually reading the characters. It was noticed that the shifting of position did not accord with the number of symbols on the lines, and afterwards when the photograph of another tablet was substituted, the same story was continued without the change being discovered . . . . He explained at great length that the actual value and significance of the symbols had been forgotten, but the tablets were recognized by unmistakable features and the interpretation of them was beyond question."

Routledge (194, pp. 250-251) knew an old man on Easter Island named Tomenika who was said to have been acquainted with an inferior kind of *rongorongo* known as the *tau*. Her visits to this old man were limited, however, by the fact that he was old and leprous. At one interview Tomenika was given a pencil and sheet of paper on which he drew "three vertical lines first of noughts then of ticks." He gave a name to each line and proceeded to recite. "He obviously used the marks simply to keep count of the different phrases." On another occasion he designed rows of glyphs and recited as he had done before, "the signs taking the place of ticks; anything from three or four to ten words were said to each sign. If he made a variation when asked to repeat, it was transporting the order of two phrases; evidently the signs themselves were not to him, now at any rate, connected with particular words."

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Little if any credence can be attached to present-day information about the significance of the tablets. However, Charli Teao, nephew of Te Haha,

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formulated a theory which expresses ideas that could neither have been invented in modern times nor transmitted by European contacts. Charli Teao was convinced that each sign was connected with a special song of magical virtue. Thus, a person who wanted to impose his will on another had to take a tablet, look at a sign, and chant the appropriate formula. The combined power of the charm and of the drawing might even cause death. The tablet signs (*rona*) had the same mana as identical signs engraved on skulls or rocks. They could make people successful in any activity symbolized by a design (fishing, dancing). Modern natives have a superstitious fear of the tablets. I was told that three years ago a man called Beriberi found a fragment of tablet. Soon after several members of his family died; believing them bewitched by the tablet, he burned it.

Teao pretended that his uncle had taught him the symbolic value of certain signs. For instance, two birds lined together meant friendship, an octopus was a charm to cause death, and so on. For several reasons, I strongly distrust his interpretation, though perhaps he was right when he asserted that many signs represented gods. One of the most frequently repeated tablet signs shows the god Makemake.

The various attempts to decipher the tablets establish only one fact: the tablets were never read, but were used during chanting. Even now the natives pretend to know tablet chants. Had early European inquiries conceived the tablets as something other than an actual script they might have solved the problem of the Easter Island tablets with a few questions.

It is highly significant that all natives who were asked to interpret an individual sign explained what it represented and never gave it a phonetic value. Even if we assume that all the experts who were interrogated were only partially initiated into the science of writing, it is strange that no one tried to spell the signs. With only a glance at the tablet they started to chant. Even a little schooling would have taught them enough to spell a few letters or a few syllables if the signs had some phonetic value. Further evidence will show that the Easter Island symbols were not a script.

Many interpretations of the tablets have been given by scholars or amateurs who tried to solve the problem without the help of natives. A detailed review of the opinions formulated by these investigators is beyond the scope of this book, the more so since they have been summarized by Lehmann (139, pp. 261-264) and by Gusinde (93, pp. 333-337). On the other hand, it is advisable to refute a few errors which have become almost traditional.

Many interpreters regard the tablets as genealogical tables (Meinicke, 152, vol. 2, p. 234; Geiseler, 87, p. 27; Thomson, 215, p. 517; Meyer, 159; Gusinde, 93, p. 336; Haberlandt, 97, pp. 97-100). This is purely hypothetical and unsupported by tradition or native statement. No Polynesian people has lists of ancestors which require 1,600 signs to record. It may be argued that several descent lines are included in one tablet or that information

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115 the projecting noses, excavated on the south-eastern slope of Raraku (fig. 73) and, when she wanted water, rather than cross the boundary and go round to the lake by the gap, through the hostile dwellers on the western side, she used to clamber with her vessel up the boundary rift in the cliff face. There was one [586] white child, who died young, but her marriage was not a success, and Viriamo left the man and went off to live with one of the Miru clan at Anakena. His house already contained a wife and family, also four brothers, but they all got on quite happily together. [592] She had five children by this man, who, like their father, [595] were all white; four of them, however, died in infancy. This was the result of the parents having most unfortunately fallen foul [754] of an old man, whose cloak had been taken without his consent, and who had accordingly prophesied disaster. The remaining child, a daughter, was living and unmarried when we were on the island. The last husband was the most satisfactory of the three; he was a Tupahotu living near Tongariki. She was handed over to him as a matter of family arrangement, in discharge of a debt, but she was quite amenable to the exchange, and was very fond of him. He was light in colour, but her only child by this marriage, our friend Juan, was dark, taking, as he said, "after my mam-ma."

593 The women do not seem, judging by existing remains, to have had always a happy time. Dr. Keith, who examined the skulls collected by the Expedition, concludes his report on one of the female specimens as follows: "The most likely explanation is that the indent of the left temple was the cause of death, produced by the blow of a club, and that the suppuration and repair of the right side has been also produced by a former blow which failed to prove fatal. Two other skulls, also those of women, show indented fractures in the left temporal region."

764 Any deficiency at marriages, in the way of social festivity, was made up at funerals. These were attended by persons from [602] all over the island, for "when they were not fighting, they were all cousins." In answer to the remark that "considering the population their whole time must have gone in this way," it was cheerfully observed that "they had nothing else to do, so they all went, everybody took food and everybody ate." The parents of one of our friends, Kapiera, lived at Anakena, but he was born on the south side of the island near Vaihu "when his